

By Ben Arnoldy

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0415/In-India-religious-violence-leaves-long-trail-of-refugee-camps>

India prides itself as a religiously diverse, secular state – and sometimes reacts defensively to international criticisms about the treatment of religious minorities. Last year, New Delhi denied entry visas to a United States government delegation tasked with monitoring religious freedom abroad.

“India is the only democracy to have blocked a visit by **USCIRF [US Commission on International Religious Freedom]**, which had been requesting entry since 2001. More than 20 other countries, including Russia, China, and Saudi Arabia, have allowed the commission to enter,” wrote the Baptist Press.

USCIRF designated India a “country of particular concern” for several years after the 2002 anti-Muslims riots in Gujarat. Last year, the group once again put India on its watch list “because the government’s response at the state and local levels has been found to be largely inadequate and the national government has failed to take effective measures to ensure the rights of religious minorities in several states.”